

Assessing Roadside Vegetation Management Alternatives
Project Management Meeting
March 17, 2005

February Action Items

Item #	Action	Due Date
1.	Ray will post the statewide herbicide numbers on website	asap
5.	Send suggestions on flow chart to Rich	asap
6.	Next meeting – in Conference room 3B	May 31

Present: Ray Willard Bruce Alber Angela Storey
Mark Wahl (by phone) John Andrews Pat Moylan
Dave McCormick Kristina Hill Rich Horner
Lee Dorigan Jay Davis Roy Scalf
Kim Willoughby (replacement for Keith Anderson)

Absent: Bob Berger Keith Anderson Heather Hansen
Karl Arne Josey Paul

Dave introduced Kim Willoughby to the group. She is taking Keith's place in the Research Office since his retirement from WSDOT. Before we got into the News Items, a discussion began regarding our next meeting. It was proposed to skip April and have a final meeting in May. Rich said it depends on the framework, but it should be okay. We decided to check back at the end of the meeting when everyone is present.

News Items: Dave said they met with the WINS/WEAN groups on Whidbey Island last week to discuss the vegetation and construction programs. He thanked Mark for everyone's participation and suggestions. The draft letter to well owners on Whidbey is done. They should be going out as soon as the identification process is completed which is very close. These are for private wells on property adjacent to the highway. Dave talked about WSDOT's budget in relation to Vegetation Management. 1) in the Commission adopted (current law) budget, overall, the Maintenance program is being cut slightly. The area that's being affected is the Equipment Fund. Still, there isn't extra money to do extra things in the next biennium. Dave said they did go through all of this with the WINS/WEAN group. 2) If we did get additional money, what would we do with it? He handed out the 2005-2015 Maintenance & Operations Plan (10 year look in regards to IVM). This plan is based on current conditions. If we don't get additional funding, we will become basically a Maintenance/Operations & Road preservation program. Legislative news: Ray said he hasn't heard anything further on the Knotweed or Invasive Species Council bills. The last he had heard was the funding for the Knotweed

program got cut by a fourth to \$500,000. For the remaining biennium, we got a little additional money for the Roadside Preservation program. We will be using it for work on Whidbey as well as other projects around the state. This money came about because of our mild winter. All the regions are prioritizing what to do with the additional funds.

No comments on last month's minutes.

Jay Davis of the US Fish & Wildlife gave a presentation on Pesticide Considerations for Aquatic Fauna. He talked about some of the roadblocks that they run into when trying to get different agencies and groups on the same page. ESA/CWA/FIFRA all have their own mandates and it's difficult to get everyone agreeing on the same thing.

- Inert ingredients (an ingredient which is not pesticidally active) is a big issue. More testing needs to be done.

- Mixtures of pesticide products and synergistic effects is another gap in current research.

- We do have good surface water monitoring in our state from USGS

NAWQA – National Aquatic Water Quality Agency

ACHE(acetylcholinesterase) activity level – neurological effect on the neurobehaviors

He talked about the sub-lethal effects on the salmon olfactory and nervous system which affects their breeding and defense systems.. Factors that effect toxicity are additive, synergistic, potentiation, and antagonism. He showed a swimming test they did when they added copper to the water with baby salmon. There are signs of acute pre-spawn mortality of Coho salmon.

He showed Longfellow Creek where King County spent \$7million to restore and yet are still having problems with water quality. It may be storm water related.

Discussion about the connection between water quality and traffic volume began.

Lee Dorigan of King County Environmental Health Dept. gave a powerpoint presentation:

- King County has reduced their herbicide use by 55% since 2000. The two people in charge of their roadside and vegetation programs are Bill Kernan and Jim Bjorgen. They have six representative locations where they have sampled soils for pesticide levels. The years covered in the presentation are 2002-2004.

- Analytes: Only looked at herbicides at this time. Roundup, Oust, Escort. There were higher ambient levels in the soils.

- Numbers: went over what the numbers meant, noting the differences between the times of the year. Talked about how trace amounts of Roundup and Oust have been showing up where new asphalt has been laid. She also mentioned how they've noticed a build up over time and that the herbicide does stay on the top of the soil.

- Conclusion: What are you going to do when things that are supposed to be biodegradable aren't?

-Guesses: some of the hypotheses are that parks and other municipalities are using higher levels of herbicides to save maintenance costs. Homeowners use high levels of herbicides and are not careful about water application. The numbers are released to the Press, but are never published. She didn't know why.

Lee said this testing runs about \$10,000 a year. King County continues to reduce their use of herbicides. They use a lot of manual control methods.

Roundup is ubiquitous. We need to find out why it's in the water. Surfactants that are used with Glyphosate is toxic.

Both King County and WSDOT use a third or less of what manufacturers recommend.

Wherever we can minimize, that's what we should be looking at.

Dave asked Jay if they have any projects that are transportation specific. Jay said there was an effort by someone in WSDOT to work together with them on the Salmonid research.

Decision Framework – Rich went through the latest version of the flow chart. He mentioned his meeting with the WSDOT Technical Advisory Group and how they basically concurred with our decisions. One of the changes mentioned was his moving the Alternative Assessment box before the Environmental Sensitivity Analysis box. There are about 40 alternatives, but are now grouped together into 7 categories (thanks to a suggestion from John Andrews). The categories are: pavement, vegetation, growth, physical or biological, material replacement, non-conventional herbicide and no action. Basically, it's the same framework except for some new wording and an additional loop. Dave suggested doing a couple of example run-throughs to see how it would work. Rich said it can't be done until he adds the final piece regarding the alternatives. Ray asked about the wording in the big diamond—do we actively manage the edge or do we let it grow to the edge? Kristina asked why should or shouldn't we maintain Zone 1? Ray's concern is the phrase, "...or vegetation control?" Maybe we should put another box to say, "...need vegetation control?" Suggestion was made to create a second diamond and a second alternative box and maybe a third for construction. Discussion began regarding what should be in the second alternative box. Ray said our people are already asking the questions. Bruce said his impression of the framework is not reduction, but alternatives. He thought the objective was to minimize the use and make it cost effective. Dave said we're basically following the WAC on minimizing types of use. Pat asked if this is a tool that maintenance in the field is going to use. Rich said no, this would be applied at management/policy level. The reason is because it needs to be analyzed and to have the assurance it will be implemented. Ray talked about the mapping out by milepost and how decisions will be made as a group concurrence of Superintendents, Supervisors and whoever is involved (Techs), in conjunction with development of the area roadside management plans. This is how the decision framework will translate into decisions made in the field. Rich remarked on how Chris Christopher had said at the TAC meeting that we're getting out of statewide Zone 1 policy/practice.

Field Observations – Referring to the handout, Ray said these are the questions and protocols we should be looking at when considering aspect of alternative methods in the field. This outlines the important questions to ask.

Data sheets – Rich talked about the x's that are there. He mentioned there were changes on the form labeled "Vegetation Management Trials".

Let Rich know if you have any suggestions. He has added a "j" for blading for snow removal. Forward your comments or suggestions through Ray.

Dave said we have an existing form and database that WSDOT maintenance is beginning to use. We could take a look and see if we could incorporate this information into the existing one and created a modified form. Make it simple to implement as possible. Ray suggested taking what's not on our form and plug it in. Kristina suggested that someone from the management level to go out and talk to the guys and explain how and why they're collecting data. Rich suggested tailgate training. Dave said we already have a very detailed process (and training manual) in evaluating and yet we still get pretty varied results.

Trials –this is for alternatives being tried. Referring to the handout, Rich said this is how he would like it to be organized. For the design of the trial, is there replication? He went through the questions and how they would like it implemented.

Kristina gave an example of some of the issues they'll be dealing with. She said that when we choose controlled replicates, we will have to consider geographic issues like adjacent vegetation, in addition to, the site specific variables. She also mentioned how the existing databases are at different scales: fine, coarse, etc. There are also off and on site variables to consider too.

Kristina handed out the final copy of the Literature Review and summary of the interviews.

It was decided to skip April and have the next meeting on Tuesday, May 31st at 11:30 am.